

Thesis Title: An investigation into jumping to conclusion bias, anxiety and delusional proneness

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Abstract

Not all of the people experiencing out-of-ordinary experiences will develop out-of-ordinary beliefs. One of the most robust correlates associated with delusion is the jumping to conclusion (JTC) bias, where individuals ground decision-making on minimal data. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between delusional proneness, trait anxiety and state anxiety JTC bias among a non-clinical sample. 105 participants recruited from a local university were divided into an anxiety induction group and a control group. Both groups completed measures on trait anxiety, intolerance of uncertainty, delusional proneness, and a probabilistic reasoning task. Whereas neither delusional proneness nor state anxiety alone could predict JTC bias, delusional prone individuals under high state anxiety displayed higher tendency of JTC bias. An interaction between gender and delusional proneness was also found: delusional proneness is positively associated with JTC bias among women while negatively associated with JTC bias among male. Also, participants with higher trait anxiety level display a higher tendency of JTC. Together, these findings suggest that delusional proneness is not linearly associated with JTC bias within the non-clinical population, and that the interplay between predispositional factors and anxiety level has to be carefully considered.

Keywords: jumping to conclusion, delusion, state anxiety, trait anxiety, gender